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ABSTRACT

The term "content and language integrated learning" is suggested as an umbrella term for a general pedagogical approach that includes a number of methods of teaching and learning non-language subjects through a second or foreign language. Usage of other, related terms is discussed, and distinctions are made between them. These include teaching content through a foreign language; content-based second language instruction; language enhanced/enriched content instruction; bilingual education; mainstream bilingual education; plurilingual education; and immersion. It is suggested that none of these are equivalent terms, and that different locales may have very different ways of realizing content and language integration, confirming the need for a broad term to encompass a variety of educational approaches. (Contains 18 references.) (MSE)

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Terminological Considerations Regarding Content and Language Integrated Learning

Tarja NIKULA & David MARSH

Résumé

Les auteurs suggèrent l'emploi du terme "content and language integrated learning" (apprentissage intégré du contenu et de la langue) - abrégé CLIL - comme hyperonyme servant à décrire une approche pédagogique générale qui inclut diverses options méthodologiques. Vu l'intensification de l'intérêt pour ce domaine, due notamment à la construction européenne, il est nécessaire, d'une part, de rassembler des observations sur l'usage des différentes méthodes qui consistent à enseigner une matière non linguistique dans une langue étrangère et, d'autre part, de pouvoir examiner les différents éventails de modèles proposés dans divers environnements pédagogiques.
Toutefois, pour favoriser le dialogue entre praticiens, chercheurs et administrateurs, il s'agit de trouver un terrain d'entente sur les fondements de la terminologie adoptée. Ceci vaut particulièrement pour la question de la "propriété" des méthodes pégagogiques.
Vu que la réussite de l'implantation de ces méthodes dépend généralement d'intérêts interdisciplinaires, surtout entre les enseignants de langue et les enseignants de disciplines non linguistiques, il faut prendre conscience du danger qu'il y aurait, à travers des questions terminologiques, à séparer plutôt qu'à faire converger des intérêts professionnels.

Like Antarctica, the methods by which a foreign language can be used as the means for instruction, are claimed by many, explored by not so many, and understood by perhaps fewer still! It is an area with riches that lie largely undisturbed, particularly with regard to mainstream education in various European states. This is still the case, even though these resources have been tapped for centuries by people from a variety of educational and political backgrounds, and academic disciplines.

Needless to say, although there are clear instances of success and advantage, this educational approach, depending on the circumstances of use, has left a long line of victims and beneficiaries in its wake. In summary, teaching and learning in a second/foreign language provides an educational experience which may be advantageous or detrimental to the interests of any specific social group. As such, it is necessary for practitioners, researchers and administrators alike, to be clear in their understanding of the usage, overlap and distinctiveness of terminology which may be used to describe the approaches and methods used in this respect.

In this article, we draw on a previous publication (NIKULA 1997) to argue for a nomenclature of 'teaching and learning non-language subjects through a second/foreign language', so as to facilitate debate, and, in particular, the sharing of observations and ideas about the various methods which may be

found in different educational environments. We argue for acceptance of the term *content and language integrated learning* as the main 'umbrella' term for the approach, under which the various methods may be identified and labelled accordingly.

Foreign languages have been used for teaching non-language subjects in one form or another for centuries. However, there was not much research on this specific educational approach before interest on language teaching and learning in general started to flourish over the last few decades. Research on such methods is not unified, and there is often little agreement on terminology. Different terms have been used to refer to phenomena which are largely similar in spite of different emphases and application in diverse socio-economic contexts.

In some environments we can see increasing use of the term *teaching content through a foreign language* which describes in a very concrete way this type of teaching (e.g. RASANEN and MARSH 1994). Another term that has been used extensively, especially in North America, is *content-based second language instruction* (e.g. BRINTON, SNOW and WESCHE 1989). But both of these pose problems in that they may be difficult to apply in different regional contexts. In the case of 'teaching in a foreign language' we may have problems with the use of 'foreign' vis-à-vis 'second' language, for example. With the latter, even though the term has a double focus of content mastery and language development, there seems to be more emphasis on language learning and teaching. To counter the predominance of language, the term *language enhanced/enriched content instruction* has also emerged by which to emphasize the role of content instruction.

These are different terms, yet often used for similar goals and methods as implemented by different professions. It is obvious that identifying a neutral term that would satisfy everybody is problematic because we are dealing with different perspectives and approaches towards the notion of integrating language and content teaching, which remains a multifaceted and many-layered phenomenon.

The term *bilingual education* has often been used as an umbrella term to refer to different ways of using non-native languages for instruction (e.g. BAKER 1993). The term has its problems, however. Firstly, it is easily associated with bilingualism, and to questions pertaining to teaching children who are brought up in bilingual family environments. Secondly, the term is fairly established when the focus is on teaching linguistic minority groups in particular. Even

though teaching in such cases is realized both through minority speakers' language and the majority language, the eventual aim is to facilitate the learners' integration into the surrounding community. To avoid such associations, the term *mainstream bilingual education* has also been used to refer to bilingual education aimed at majority children in a situation where they usually also receive formal teaching of the language in question (e.g. BAKER 1993:165, MARSH et al. 1996:7).

But, once again, such variation on a theme is problematic. Classrooms in Europe may comprise children from many different 'heritage language' backgrounds, and thus, the term *mainstream bilingual education* may not suffice because even if the national language is x, and the teaching language is y, more than half of the pupils/students in a class may represent different languages. For some European schools in the 1990s this is now the rule, rather than the exception, and the concept of pupils having a majority language is problematic.

The advantage of the term *bilingual education* is that it reflects well the everyday reality of many schools in which two languages are used for instruction: the pupils' native language and a foreign language. On the other hand, the term may also be misleading in the contexts where more than two languages are used for instruction. This is, possibly, why VLAEMINCK (1996:5) uses the word *plurilingual* rather than *bilingual* when talking about the future challenges of language teaching and learning in Europe. In the same way, the term *plurilingual education* could be used to refer to teaching conducted in languages other than the students' mother tongue. However, this term has not been established as yet to refer to the use of non-native languages as a means of instruction, even though it occurs in the name of the European network on integrated content and language teaching launched in 1997: EuroCLIC: Content and Language Integrated Classrooms. A European Network for Plurilingual Education.[1]

The term *immersion* is also often used in a broad sense to refer to teaching conducted through languages other than the learners' native language. Immersion education is, however, a fairly established concept and even though there are different forms of immersion (e.g. early total immersion, late partial immersion), its basic principles are always the same (BAKER 1995, SWAIN & LAPKIN 1982). In immersion education, at least 50% of instruction is conducted through a non-native language. In addition, every teacher has only one linguistic relationship with his or her pupils, i.e. there is no code-switching. In immersion

[1] The network is jointly organized by the European Platform for Dutch Education, the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, and the University of Uppsala, Sweden.

education, the aim is for majority language children to acquire both the target language and the target culture and to become functionally bilingual and bicultural. Teaching methods are pupil-centred and communicative to ensure opportunities for natural language use (e.g. LAURÉN 1991). The term *immersion* usually describes the overall educational approach to which students are subjected. Individual teachers who teach through a foreign language may apply immersion education methodologies in their own teaching but if, for example, pupils are only taught one subject that way, their education as a whole does not meet the criteria for immersion. *Immersion* can thus not be used as a synonym for any type of teaching happening through a foreign language. Yet, there are instances of this term being increasingly used to describe methods which differ substantially from the original tenets as implemented in North America.

In recent years, many researchers and practitioners have talked about integrating language and content when they refer to various ways in which foreign languages are used as means of instruction (e.g. SNOW, MET & GENESEE 1989, SWAIN 1996). *Content and language integration*, or *content and language integrated learning*, are useful terms because they give emphasis to neither language teaching and learning, nor to content teaching and learning. The term is broad enough for the specific blend of content and language objectives to be made according to the specific objectives of the school in which the method is used.

Another advantage is that the term *content and language integration* is broad enough to cover both immersion education where all instruction is conducted through a foreign language and other types of foreign-language enhanced education where students only receive certain parts of their education through the medium of a foreign language. Thirdly, content and language integration gives emphasis to the fact that to be successful, this type of education needs specification of language-learning as well as content-learning objectives because, as SNOW et al. (1989:204) put it, "it is unlikely that desired levels of second/foreign language proficiency will emerge simply from the teaching of content through a foreign language".

The objectives of content and language integrated education vary according to how extensively the foreign language is used for instruction. Functional bilingualism may be an objective in cases where pupils receive a very large proportion of their instruction in a foreign language. At the other extreme, the objectives of small-scale efforts may be to encourage pupils to use foreign languages and to make it easier for them, for example, to participate in exchange programmes. Moreover, different countries may have very different ways of

realizing content and language integrated education (see FRUHAUF et al. 1996). The sociocultural situation in each country in general and decisions in educational policy in particular always have an effect, so there is no single blueprint of content and language integration that could be applied in the same way in different countries (BAETENS BEARDSMORE 1993:39).

Now as we see increasing focus on the value of methods which enhance the learning of different languages, so it would be worthwhile for interest groups to cooperate more fully, and sharing research findings and experience. Even if eventual goals differ, the philosophy and methodological basis for these methods is often surprisingly similar. As succinctly argued by BAETENS BEARDSMORE (1997:14) there are many areas in which we need to understand more about the impact of such educational methods. One means by which to do this is to bring practicioners and researchers together so as to enhance joint understanding. However, this is difficult to achieve if we fail to understand each other because of the usage of different terminology, be it exclusive or inclusive.

As we argued at the beginning of this article, education in a second or foreign language is not a new phenomenon. We only have to look at the expansion of the Roman empire in which Greece became dependent on Rome to accept this (see TAKALA 1994). And because the riches to be gained through informed and well-planned implementation are promising, increasing interest is being generated throughout Europe in regions where there has previously been rather little interest in promoting the levels of multilingualism envisaged in pan-European political discourse (see, for example, European Commission 1995 and 1997). Because of this interest, much has to be gained from examining and learning from the experience of those regions which offer a long tradition of *language and content integrated learning*. Thus there is a need to at least understand how terminology is used across the different disciplines to which this interest in integration applies.

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